

VZCZCXRO4150
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHDS #2493/01 2930450
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 200450Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6545
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEWMFD/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 002493

DEPT FOR PRM, AF/E:JWiegert, G/TIP, CA/VO, CA/FPP

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SMIG](#) [KTIP](#) [KHLS](#) [ASEC](#) [AORC](#) [INS](#) [IOM](#) [ML](#) [NG](#) [SG](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA - VISUALIZING IRREGULAR MIGRATION PATTERNS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 1, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) officials publicized i-Map, a tool that visually maps irregular migration patterns, and recent efforts to bring the GoE on board as an information-sharing partner. Under the auspices of the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue, Frontex and Europol spurred the creation of this system, which combines a secure, members-only interface with a public website that illustrates key migration routes, enhancing irregular migration information sharing by partner countries and agencies. Given Ethiopia's prominence in two major irregular migration routes, ICMPD officials are reaching out to the Government of Ethiopia. To date, the GoE is receptive to this multilateral information-sharing tool, which includes government and non-governmental partners. By increasing GoE awareness and introspection, this dialogue and tool have the capacity to bolster Ethiopia's capacity to combat irregular migration. End Summary.

i-Map and the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogues

¶2. (SBU) ConOff attended a meeting at the Dutch Embassy to publicize an interactive map on migration (i-Map) tool and recent efforts to bring the GoE on board. This initiative falls under the Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue - an informal, intergovernmental dialogue addressing the migration-security and migration-development nexus in the region. Within this policy context, Frontex and Europol teamed up with ICMPD to develop the i-Map concept. This tri-lingual tool allows for visualization of major migration routes, while also furnishing hyperlinks to analysis and reports on a secure interface. Detailed information on this secure portal includes interception and apprehension details, smuggling and trafficking activities, reception and detention/retention of irregular migrants, asylum and protection issues, and return and readmission. The i-Map groups profiles into three categories - national (country profiles), regional (principal migration routes), and local (focusing on migration hubs). The i-Map also provides the big picture view of irregular migration, highlighting route changes as enforcement improves along certain legs of key routes.

¶3. (SBU) Under the auspices of the MTM Dialogue, partner countries are harnessing the i-Map to examine irregular migration patterns, routes, and flows. To date, thirty-seven partner states and agencies can access the MTM i-Map. The partner agencies include the ICMPD, Europol, Frontex, INTERPOL, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UNHCR, and Odysseus Academic Network. The detailed information within i-Map comes from the MTM partner states - an effort to build trust and foster ownership of the tool. ICMPD officials noted that they emphasize the "transit" in Mediterranean Transit Migration to facilitate information sharing. (Note: Some nations are less willing to share internal migration data for security reasons but are able to share transit data. End Note.) Open source material complements the state-provided data, with partner agencies performing quality checks on every profile. Regular information exchange with partners and daily press screening ensures currency of

i-Map information.

Engaging Ethiopia

¶4. (SBU) Ethiopia is both a source and a transit country in two of the three major irregular migration routes. The East African route begins in the Horn of Africa, heads north to Italy or Malta via Sudan, Libya, and Egypt. The second major route, dubbed the East Mediterranean Route, begins in the Horn of Africa, Asia, or Central Asia, with migrants heading to Greece, Cyprus, or Bulgaria via Turkey. Ethiopia's prominence in these two routes spurred ICMPD and the MTM dialogue to engage the GoE. The ICMPD also identified Senegal, Mali, and Niger as new partner countries.

¶5. (SBU) ICMPD officials held initial discussions with the GoE regarding the i-Map initiative. Various Ethiopian authorities, including officials from Ministry of Capacity Building, revenue/customs, the Federal Police Commission, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Capacity Building, Justice, and Labor/Social Affairs met with the i-Map team. ICMPD officials described the initial contact with the GoE as "positive," citing a verbal agreement to develop the irregular migration map first, followed by a migration and development map. To maintain momentum, the ICMPD established a temporary office in Addis Ababa, naming Jean Lanoue as the on-site contact in Ethiopia.

U.S. on the i-Map?

¶6. (SBU) ICMPD officials mentioned previous meetings with U.S. and Canada on the idea of developing a Western Hemisphere Map. However,

ADDIS ABAB 00002493 002 OF 002

they noted that the United States is currently not a partner country of the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue. Therefore, U.S. officials currently do not have access to the secure interface portion of the MTM i-Map website.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: By increasing GoE awareness and introspection, this dialogue and tool have the capacity to bolster Ethiopia's capacity to combat irregular migration. On an internal level, this multilateral information sharing may force increased communication between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Administration for Refugees and Returnees. Currently, these two agencies share responsibility for illegal migration issues. The MTM i-Map project also fosters external cooperation with information sharing between the GoE, other partner countries, and several non-governmental entities. On a regional level, engaging in the MTM i-Map project bolsters the East African Police Chiefs' Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO) efforts to combat smuggling and trafficking in the region. Given Ethiopia's unstable neighborhood and porous borders, a clearer picture of irregular migration issues will advance Ethiopia's capacity to secure its borders and combat irregular migration. End comment.

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